

null  
Diana T Fritz 03/15/2007 03:04:03 PM From DB/Inbox: Search Results

Cable  
Text:

UNCLASSIFIED

SIPDIS  
TELEGRAM

March 22, 2004

To: No Action Addressee  
Action: Unknown  
From: AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI (ABU DHABI 814 - ROUTINE)  
TAGS: PHUM, PREL  
Captions: None  
Subject: TRIP READOUT - G/TIP VISIT TO UAE  
Ref: None

---

UNCLAS ABU DHABI 00814

SIPDIS  
CXABU:  
ACTION: AMB  
INFO: POL DCM

DISSEMINATION: AMB  
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: AMB:MWAHBA  
DRAFTED: POL:SRADDANT  
CLEARED: DCM:RALBRIGHT POL:JMAYBURY CGD:JDAVIS

VZCZCADI993  
RR RUEHC RUEHDI RUEHZM RUEHXS RUCNEEC  
DE RUEHAD #0814/01 0821403  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 221403Z MAR 04  
FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3657  
INFO RUEHDI/AMCONSUL DUBAI 3868  
RUEHZM/GCC COLLECTIVE  
RUEHXS/ASEAN COLLECTIVE  
RUCNEEC/EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 07 ABU DHABI 000814

SIPDIS

DEPT. PLEASE PASS TO ALNED, CISC, AND ALSAC COLLECTIVES

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR G/TIP, INL, DRL, NEA/RA, AND NEA/ARP

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [TC](#)  
SUBJECT: TRIP READOUT - G/TIP VISIT TO UAE

REFS: (A) TAYLOR/RADDANT EMAIL, FEB. 3, 2004 (B)  
TAYLOR/RADDANT EMAIL, JAN. 26, 2004 (C) ABU DHABI 2335 (D)  
BAKU 390 (E) DUBAI 1267

1. (SBU) SUMMARY. From February 11 to 15, G/TIP Senior Coordinator for Reports Mark Taylor and NEA/RA Desk Officer Nahide Bayrasli visited the UAE to update information for the 2004 Trafficking in Persons Report. The meetings were very informative, and the team stated on several occasions

that they were impressed with the progress the UAE has made over the past year on the camel jockey issue. However, the meetings also revealed that the UAEG and the G/TIP office are following different definitions of what constitutes sex trafficking and what the UAEG should be doing to address it.

12. (SBU) One year ago, prior to the UAE's jump from tier three to tier one in the Trafficking in Persons report, the UAEG determined that it could confront its trafficking problem within two years. Over the past year, the UAE put measures into place to successfully control trafficking in camel jockeys. These measures were led by Shaykh Hamdan bin Zayed's ban on underage camel jockeys, which was implemented despite significant political pressure from older and more traditional members of his own family and from the Camel Racing Federation, whose director was recently replaced. Dropping the UAE from tier one to tier two halfway into its two-year plan would threaten the good progress made by the UAEG to date, since Shaykh Hamdan would lose the credibility and political leverage required to move forward with the next steps of the UAE's anti-TIP plan.

13. (SBU) While the UAE has put some important measures into place to combat sex trafficking, the USG and UAEG will work together over the next year to refocus efforts of its two-year plan from camel jockeys to trafficked prostitutes. Post and UAEG is working together to implement a two-month action plan that will fill some of the information gaps discovered during the visit. Also, Post and the UAEG will create an extended 12-month action plan to help broaden the UAEG's more narrow definition of sex trafficking, while striking an appropriate balance between maintaining an open, business- and tourist-friendly environment with the need to crack down on those attempting to enter the country for nefarious reasons. END SUMMARY.

14. (SBU) During the visit, the delegation discussed the camel jockey issue at length with the Camel Racing Federation's Executive Secretary Essa Al Kheyali, and afterwards they observed a camel race. At the Ministry of Interior, the team discussed the camel jockey, domestic servant, and sex trafficking issues with representatives from the Department of Naturalization and Residency, the Abu Dhabi Police, the Al Ain Social Support Center, and the Legal Department. At the Ministry of Labor, Undersecretary of Labor Dr. Khalid Al Khazraji primarily talked about the upcoming labor law and working conditions for domestic servants. At the Ministry of Justice, the delegation talked to the Undersecretary for Planning and International Cooperation, Ambassador Abdulrahim Al Awadi, about its concerns over the low number of prosecutions of traffickers. It also asked a number of questions about existing anti-trafficking law, and recommended MOJ review of a U.S.-created model anti-TIP law. Similarly, the team asked a number of legal-based questions to the Chairman of the Jurists Association, Dr. Mohammad Al Roken. The team gave a trip overview to MFA Undersecretary of Political Affairs, Ambassador Abdullah Rashid Al Noaimi, and expressed its concerns that the UAE is not doing enough to combat sex trafficking and, as a result, may drop to tier two. The meetings with the Dubai Police Department Commander Lt. General Khalfan Al Tamimi focused primarily on sex trafficking, and the challenges police face in controlling the influx of women coming to Dubai each year to work as prostitutes. Conversation about sex trafficking continued during a follow-on meeting with a Human Rights Committee comprised of representatives from the police, immigration, public prosecution, and concerned private citizens. Finally, the team was able to discuss all trafficking topics at length with representatives from source countries, including the Philippines, India, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Indonesia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, and Ukraine, at roundtables in both Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

-----  
CAMEL JOCKEY PROGRESS

-----  
15. (SBU) The delegation, PolChief and PolOff met with representatives of the new administration governing the Camel Racing Federation (CRF), whose inspection committees oversee every camel race on the UAE's 8 major and 15 minor camel racing tracks. These representatives have replaced the former Managing Director of the CRF, Khalfan Khamees, and his staff, who were unflatteringly featured in the February 2003 Australian Broadcasting Corporation's video expose about the UAE's continued use of underage foreign camel jockeys. During the meeting, the CRF's Executive Secretary, Ambassador Essa Al Kheyali, spelled out the

SIPDIS

steps taken by the UAE in 2003 to combat the use of trafficked and underage boys as camel jockeys, while pointing out additional work that still needs to be done. He described in detail the medical procedures in place to check the age and health of the boys before the issuance of mandatory identification cards, as well as DNA tests to prove that those claiming to be the boys' parents truly are. Al Kheyali stated that, since the DNA testing began last racing season, 47 boys have been stopped from entering the country with false "parents" (a.k.a. traffickers). Working through source country embassies, consulates, and NGOs, the boys were humanely repatriated at UAEG expense.

16. (SBU) While the new administration is well versed in the Presidential Decree specifying age and weight requirements of camel jockeys, Al Kheyali told the G/TIP delegation that, at this time, the CRF is focusing on the age and overall health of the boys, and not emphasizing the weight requirement. Al Kheyali explained that this requirement has been the single most contentious issue within the camel racing community since the ban was reinforced in September 2002, and may be the element holding up the ban's passage into federal law. The matter is before the Supreme Council for consideration. While relevant parties from all the emirates have generally accepted the age limit, many question why the weight requirement is necessary if the age limitation is followed and the overall health of the jockeys is good. There have been many comparisons between the requirements camel jockeys must follow vs. those of horse jockeys, who do not face a weight requirement. Also, in separate conversations, the MFA has pointed out that, during its discussions with the ILO regarding this issue, the weight requirement has not been emphasized. The ILO's main focus has been on the age requirement and the overall health of the jockeys.

17. (SBU) Taylor told Al Kheyali that he had heard of the impressive progress made by the UAE on this issue, and he wished the CRF continued success in eliminating the practice. At meetings at the Ministries of Interior and Foreign Affairs, he expressed his concern that the weight requirement was not being followed.

18. (SBU) During two roundtable discussions during the G/TIP visit with embassy and consulate representatives from Philippines, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, Sudan, Azerbaijan, Belarus, and Ukraine, all confirmed that they thought the camel jockey issue is no longer a major concern. Representatives from the missions of Pakistan and Bangladesh have stated the same in meetings over the past several months. They said that traffickers are deterred by the tightened UAE restrictions. Due to the identity card mandate, CRF inspectors are locating and assisting trafficking victims at racetracks. Also, source country embassies and consulates are intervening and assisting the victims when the boys come in to acquire the documents required to obtain the mandatory identity cards. The Pakistani Embassy stated that, in 2003, it, with the assistance of the UAEG and NGOs in Pakistan, humanely repatriated 125 boys who were previously working as camel jockeys. The Bangladeshi Embassy claimed that they have done the same for approximately 120 - 150 boys. Both countries have stated that they are satisfied with the

procedures the UAEG has implemented to locate the trafficked boys and return them to their home countries. They stated that, due to the stricter requirements and medical testing, few, if any, new cases of trafficking are occurring.

-----  
DOMESTIC SERVANTS  
-----

¶9. (SBU) Meeting with G/TIP officials, the Undersecretary for the Ministry of Labor (MOL), Dr. Khalid Al Khazraji, reported that approximately 700,000 people, primarily women, were working in the UAE as domestic servants. While he, and later police representatives and source country representatives, all talked to the delegation about the few incidents of abuse that occur in the UAE, they all stated that workers are generally satisfied with their situations. When problems arise, the Ministry of Interior, police, and courts intervene and mediate an agreement between the parties. However, there were some complaints from source country representatives during the roundtables that the process can be time-consuming, and often the workers prefer to settle quickly and return home rather than stay in the UAE to fight for their rights. Both the UAEG and source country representatives stated that these jobs remain very attractive, and workers compete heavily to get them. Domestic servants in the UAE can make 3 - 4 times (or more) the salary they can make back home, so they continue to come.

¶10. (SBU) Al Khazraji explained that domestic servants are not covered under the existing labor law, nor will they likely be covered under the new labor law expected to be ratified this summer. He explained that working conditions are listed in contracts signed by all parties and registered by the Ministry of Interior's Labor Supply Office. Complaints are also resolved through this office. A local NGO representative and practicing attorney, Dr. Mohamed Al Roken, told the G/TIP team that most or all disputes between domestic servants and their employers are resolved amicably. He also told the delegation, and source country representatives confirmed, that before domestic servants depart the UAE, immigration officials interview them to ensure that they have been paid per their contracts.

-----  
SEX TRAFFICKING  
-----

¶11. (SBU) Conversations about the UAE's efforts to combat trafficking in women for the purposes of sexual exploitation revealed that there is considerable inconsistency between G/TIP's and the UAEG's definitions of sex trafficking. Police, several ministry officials, and even source country representatives, told the delegation that they believed that most prostitutes are living and working in the UAE by choice, due to extreme economic hardship back in their own countries. The Commander of the Dubai Police Department, Lt. Gen. Dhahi Khalfan Al Tamimi, cited numerous examples of "repeat cases," or women who are deported repeatedly for prostitution only to return within a few months, using fraudulent documents, to continue their trade. This trend of economic migration through the sex industry is well documented in several USG TIP and Human Rights Country Reports from source countries, as well as in NGO statements (including the IOM, see ref D), and many of the women themselves during interviews here in the UAE.

¶12. (SBU) Police and Ministry of Interior officials told Taylor and Bayrasli that many of the women working as prostitutes in the UAE are well-educated and have families back home to support. They stated that the women could not expect to make a fraction of the money there that they can earn in the UAE in this profession. TIP reports from several of the CIS countries confirm the economic hardship faced by these women, and the drive to take extreme

measures to support their households. At times, the women incur a substantial debt to those who smuggled them into the UAE. While some may later come to regret their decision, those who do so are not, in the view of the UAE (as well as other individuals and organizations, including the IOM, see ref D), considered trafficking victims. Thus, G/TIP's broader trafficking definition, by which standard nearly all prostitutes working in the UAE might be considered trafficking victims, startled most of the delegation's UAEG interlocutors.

¶13. (SBU) During the delegation's meetings with the Ministries of Interior and Justice, Dubai Police, and the chairman of the NGO Jurists' Association, it became clear that, while the UAEG's definition of trafficking is different from our own, there are legal systems in place to try to distinguish trafficking victims from those who choose to break the law. Police in Dubai reported to the team that, after arrest, all prostitutes are interviewed by the Anti-Trafficking in Persons unit in the Criminal Investigative Division (CID), created in July 2003, to determine if they are victims of a larger criminal syndicate. Additionally, police attempt to gather information about customers, traffickers, and others who benefit from the sex industry during these interviews, with a goal of prosecuting them.

¶14. (SBU) In addition to working closely with the new anti-TIP CID office, the Dubai Police Department's Human Rights Care Department Director, Dr. Mohammad Abdullah Al Mur, reported that he also coordinates with anti-TIP specialists in the Immigration Department and Public Prosecution. He has recently formed a Human Rights Care Committee that includes CID, Immigration, Public Prosecution, and his own department, along with representatives from the MFA, Health and Labor Departments, and non-governmental entities from academia, media, and the business world. The committee's goal is to study TIP and other human rights issues, focusing on a multi-dimensional approach toward combating these problems. The G/TIP team stated that it looked forward to hearing more about the committee's activities in the future, after it has had more time to work together as a unit.

-----  
REASONABLE EXPECTATIONS - POST'S TRIP ANALYSIS  
-----

¶15. (SBU) There seemed to be a sense of surprise, particularly at the Ministries of Interior and Justice and the Dubai Police, at the delegation's primary focus on the UAE's progress on sex trafficking. While they were able to explain some good steps taken over the reporting year (explained in septel Trafficking in Persons Report) to combat sex trafficking, the UAEG had expected to use this visit to highlight its impressive record on the camel jockey issue, which it viewed as the USG's primary focus in ¶2003.

¶16. (SBU) Post also was surprised by the rapid shift in focus from camel jockeys to sex trafficking. Although sex trafficking has understandably been a key piece of the trafficking in persons puzzle since the start of the TIP reporting requirement, it was never emphasized in the UAE as strongly as was the camel jockey issue until very late in this reporting season. Post had been under the impression, after months of emails (see refs A and B), telephone conversations over the reporting year, that the UAE would need to showcase its progress on the camel jockey issue in the 2004 report and during the G/TIP visit. Only when the team arrived at Post in February, less than a month before the deadline of the annual TIP reporting cable, was it made clear that sex trafficking would be the focus of the meetings and the litmus test of the ranking process in 2004.

¶17. (SBU) As explained in Ref. C, the UAE imposed on itself a two-year deadline for full implementation of its anti-TIP efforts in May 2003, prior to its tier one ranking in the



2003 TIP report. At that time, a number of USG officials agreed that this was a reasonable timeframe for such a comprehensive undertaking, considering the expected resistance from more conservative social elements, the taboo nature of the subject, the lack of properly trained and experienced law enforcement personnel, and the necessity to continue the "open" environment which supports the crucial tourism and business industries here. Post feels that it is not reasonable to expect all facets of the trafficking problem to be fully addressed in only one year's time. The UAE allotted two years to confront its trafficking problem in its entirety. Now that it has successfully confronted and controlled trafficking in camel jockeys, it needs this second year to refocus its efforts on combating sex trafficking.

¶18. (SBU) All that said, the UAE is politically committed to eliminating all forms of prostitution on its soil, including and especially those cases involving trafficked prostitutes. Some senior UAEG officials have repeatedly classified all forms of prostitution as un-Islamic and a scourge to society. However, the Mission will need to work with the UAEG to ensure that its definition of trafficking better matches the USG's broader definition. Doing so will be key in our effort to ensure that the UAE improves its record of treating trafficked prostitutes as victims rather than criminals. Although the political will to fight trafficking in persons exists at all levels of government, new procedures and institutions will need to be set up. Also, most officials need training in the subject, and in fact they have been requesting it from the U.S. throughout the reporting year.

-----  
SPECIAL CHALLENGES AND NEXT STEPS  
-----

¶19. (SBU) There are several unique circumstances faced by the UAE that will make full implementation of some of the steps required to combat trafficking a special challenge. One point to consider is the UAE's need to balance a multi-approached "crackdown" on TIP with an economic need to remain open for business, transportation and tourism, especially in Dubai, where oil resources are rapidly dwindling. Tourism, transportation services, and a variety of new businesses rely on an open and welcoming environment to thrive. Add to that a private sector workforce that is approximately 98% non-national, and it becomes clear why the UAE needs some time to create the appropriate balance between maintaining this open environment and the need to crack down on those attempting to enter the country for nefarious reasons. As the Commander of the Dubai Police Department quipped during the visit, "You can't stop all beautiful young women from coming to the UAE!" While it's true that some women come here to work as prostitutes, many more come to tour, shop, open businesses, or work in any number of other occupations. So the UAE is faced with the dilemma of having to decide which women (and their money) are allowed in and which get turned around at the border after being determined to be at risk for becoming prostitutes.

¶20. (SBU) The UAE is in consultations with the IOM in Kuwait for guidance in holding two anti-TIP training opportunities. One is an inter-ministerial conference, organized through the MFA. The second will provide advanced police training to officers and students at the Abu Dhabi Police College. Both events are scheduled for May 2004. One prominent NGO, the General Women's Union, has expressed an interest in hosting a regional anti-TIP conference, and will soon travel to the U.S. for consultations with State Department experts in women's issues in order to determine the best strategy for holding such an event.

¶21. (SBU) May 20 through June 10, an MOI lawyer and police officer will attend a trafficking in persons seminar in Washington, D.C., sponsored by the International Visitor

Program. At practically all meetings between PolOff and UAEG officials, there are additional requests for training, either in Washington, the UAE, or elsewhere in the region, and for U.S. guidance in combating TIP. Post looks forward to the arrival of a DOJ Resident Legal Advisor in late Spring to help facilitate these requests.

-----  
ACTION PLAN  
-----

¶22. (SBU) Since the G/TIP visit, Post has begun to take a number of steps aimed at building on other improvements taken throughout the year. We have regrouped with various ministries and organizations to redefine the UAE's short-term TIP strategy, covering the next two months. We are engaging at both the federal and emirate levels with the following action plan that also requires action in Washington:

--PolChief has spoken at length with the office manager of the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, with the purpose of locating and reenergizing the Anti-TIP Conference Proposal (drafted with the assistance of IOM). The goal is to hold this conference in May.

--PolChief has also inquired about the initial impressions of the model Anti-TIP law given to MFA in late February. MFA stated it is in the process of reviewing the document, and will forward it to the Ministry of Justice upon completion.

--CG Dubai has met with the Dubai Prosecutor General to discuss the model Anti-TIP law and to stress the importance of defining the TIP issue more broadly, arresting and prosecuting more traffickers, and treating TIP victims as victims rather than criminals (see ref. E).

--CG Dubai has also met with the Dubai Deputy Commander of Police to discuss the importance of defining the TIP issue more broadly, arresting and prosecuting more traffickers, and treating TIP victims as victims rather than criminals. He recommended that the police consider requiring all women who frequent known "trouble spots" (certain clubs, bars, hotels, etc.) have their passports on them. The Deputy Commander was interested in the proposal, and will consider it further after discussing it with other departments.

--We plan to meet with Shaykh Saif Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, U/S of the Ministry of Interior, to discuss how to progress on TIP issues. We will stress the importance of coordinating efforts among MOI departments to more effectively combat trafficking in persons in the UAE, and to keep statistical data and create annual reports to document progress made.

--PolOff will respond to NEA/RA by March 24 re: feedback on the Polaris Project Report, feedback on the camel jockey article forwarded by desk, and any other articles/anecdotes forwarded by G/TIP.

--By March 30, PolOff will follow up phone calls with a meeting with the Abu Dhabi Police College to help arrange the May Anti-TIP Training Seminar, with IOM assistance. PolOff will also continue to coordinate a visit to the UAE by the head of the IOM office in Kuwait.

--PolOff will meet with the Abu Dhabi Police to gather specific information of their anti-TIP efforts by March 30.

--PolOff will spend one day in Al Ain by April 7 to be fully briefed on TIP efforts by the police, prosecutors, and immigration officials. The trip will include a tour of the Social Support Center, a meeting with the chief prosecutor (who attended the February 2003 anti-TIP conference in D.C.), and meetings with non-governmental contacts who follow the TIP issue.

--By April 15, the DCM will meet with Undersecretary Al Awadi of the Ministry of Justice to discuss the model Anti-TIP law, as well as to stress the importance of defining

the TIP issue more broadly, arresting and prosecuting more traffickers, and treating TIP victims as victims rather than as criminals.

--By April 15, an appropriate person in NEA/ARP should meet with the Embassy of the UAE in DC to brief on the upcoming report, warn that there is a risk of dropping to tier two, and discuss measures that should be taken to prevent the drop. ACTION: NEA/ARP

--By April 15, PolOff will spend a day in Dubai to be fully briefed on all additional TIP efforts since the G/TIP visit. The trip will include an extended tour of the Human Rights Care Department, including demonstration of its 24/7 hotline. The trip will also include separate meetings with immigration, CID, and public prosecution officials, as well as the full Human Rights Care Committee.

¶23. (SBU) In addition to this two-month action plan, the UAEG and USG will work together to create a year-long strategy to tackle the sex trafficking issue as effectively as the camel jockey issue was handled in 2003. Post will propose the following action items:

--Formulating a detailed inter-ministry national action plan;

--Creating broadly-distributed publicity campaigns;

--Providing Post with more statistics, reports, and other quantifiers;

--Drafting and implementing federal anti-TIP legislation, based on the model law given to MFA;

--Ratifying the camel jockey regulation currently before the Supreme Council;

--Discussing a law to require all non-nationals to carry ID (preferably a passport) with them at all times;

--Further strengthening visa requirements from high risk source countries prior to entry into the UAE;

--Increasing the frequency of regular inter-ministry task force meetings;

--Opening an IOM office in Abu Dhabi and/or Dubai;

--Expanding the Dubai anti-TIP CID and public prosecutor units, and duplicate efforts in Abu Dhabi;

--Promoting inter-emirate law enforcement cooperation to investigate cases of TIP;

--Offering TIP training regularly (through OPDAT) to police, police colleges, jurists, journalists, immigration authorities, and other ministries who request it.

-----  
FINAL COMMENTS  
-----

¶24. (SBU) Shaykh Hamdan bin Zayed took a significant political challenge in September 2002 by pushing for a ban on underage camel jockeys. As a younger and more modern member of the family, he stood up against more senior and traditional members of his own family and the ruling families of the neighboring emirates. He is succeeding in his efforts to improve the country's negative trafficking in persons record, and evidence of this fact is last year's tier one ranking by G/TIP. However, this good progress could be threatened if the UAE is dropped from tier one to two in the 2004 Trafficking in Persons report based on a new emphasis and criteria on sex trafficking that we introduced in January 2004, without giving the UAEG the opportunity to fulfill its two-year plan to combat all forms of trafficking in persons.



¶25. (SBU) It is clear that the steps the UAEG has taken to date to eliminate trafficking of young foreign boys to work as camel jockeys have been very effective. Post believes that, given an appropriate amount of time to act, the UAE can achieve its goal of combating all forms of trafficking in persons with the same level of success in the sex trafficking arena as it has shown with the camel jockey issue. Dropping the UAE to tier two now would weaken Shaykh Hamdan's hand and potentially slow the momentum he worked hard to build over the past year in the trafficking arena. This benefits no one - neither the victims, nor the UAEG, nor the USG's worldwide efforts to combat trafficking.

¶26. (SBU) Post is not/not lobbying to keep the UAE at tier one indefinitely. On the contrary, if tangible results are not seen on the sex trafficking issue after one year (thus giving the UAE a chance to fulfill its two-year plan), post agrees that a drop to tier two would be an appropriate wake-up call. However, until the 2005 report, the USG and UAEG should work together to refocus efforts from camel jockeys to trafficked prostitutes, following both short- and long-term action plans, to help sharply reduce the incidence of human trafficking.

WAHBA